

Office of the Director

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Staff Guidance on Lobbying, Advocacy, and Education Efforts

Things staff can do individually on their own time:

- Send emails, call or meet with elected officials. Make it very clear that you are representing your personal opinion as a constituent, and are not speaking on behalf of the department. Use your personal email/computer and phone.
- Participate in professional organization or advocacy efforts, such as with the Washington State Nurses Association, or with groups like the Children's Alliance.
- Talk with friends and neighbors about public health.
- Meet during a lunch hour or after work to organize efforts outside of a Public Health facility.

Activities we are not allowed to do as County employees include:

- Use of any County equipment, facilities, or supplies to promote advocacy efforts (e.g., telephones, copy machines, computers, faxes or letterhead, conference rooms, etc.).
- Presenting your personal viewpoints as official Public Health – Seattle & King County positions.
- Revealing the name of any Public Health client when advocating for a cause.
- Distribution of advocacy-related handouts or fliers on Public Health facility premises during work time.
- Wearing advocacy-related clothes or accessories at work.
- Posting advocacy-related material in public areas of County facilities.
- Soliciting client names or asking clients to speak to the media or participate in advocacy unless, as part of the department's communication efforts, you are asked to identify clients who would be willing to speak to the media.

Q&A

- **Is it appropriate for me to send an email message from my work account or make a phone call at work to a councilmember or state legislator in support of Public Health funding?**
No. Personal messages to elected officials should be sent or made from your personal email account or personal phone—and on your own time.
- **Is it appropriate to have advocacy materials (e.g., signage, buttons, or shirts with advocacy messages) that are viewable by the public at the workplace?**
Materials that direct individuals to Public Health's website are acceptable. In addition, flyers or signage that have been reviewed and approved can be posted on lunchroom bulletin boards. Union members may post advocacy related materials (any posting must have a union logo) on designated union bulletin boards within a worksite.
- **May we give names and phone numbers of elected officials to our clients/customers?**
If requested, you may provide clients with a central contact number at Public Health where they can leave a voicemail expressing their concerns; you can let them know that Public Health will relay those messages to the County Executive's Office. You may not provide contact information for elected officials.
- **Can we ask clients if they are willing to speak to the media about the impact service cuts and site closures will have on them?**
You may not solicit client names or request clients to speak to the media. The only exception to this is if, as part of the department's communication efforts, you are asked to identify clients who would be willing to speak to the media about the impact site closures or service reductions would have on them. This request would come from someone on the department's communications team.

- **What should I say to a client if they ask “what can I do to help?”**

You can let them know that as a community member their voice is important and remind them that they may communicate their opinions through the Public Health Budget Comment Line or participate in the normal county budget process, which includes public budget hearings in the fall.

Public Health Budget Comment Line: 1-866-852-3004; Email Comments: publichealth@kingcounty.gov

These Guidelines may be updated as we move through the budget process.

If you have questions about the advocacy guidelines contact Don Moritz, Public Health Human Resources Manager, at don.moritz@kingcounty.gov

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